

DECEMBER 18, 2014

The Town Council met in regular session at the Town Hall at 5:00 p.m.

Present were: STRAW, GIBBS, WARRUM, WALKER, and WILSON along with Clerk-Treasurer Karla Atkins and Attorney Adam Farrar.

The following visitors were present: Jennifer & Alvin Blaylock, Nancy McCaslin, Betty Gibbs, Virginia Alsop, David Campbell, Brenda Drone, David Flanders, Carlene & David VanLaningham, Amanda Bryden, Valerie Werkmeister, Bobby Grider, and Scott Champlin.

Councilman Walker made and Warrum seconded a motion the minutes of the previous regular meeting be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Gas/street superintendent Bobby Grider announced leaf pick-up will end December 19. Beyond that date, all leaves will need to be bagged.

Gas/street superintendent Grider requested permission to purchase a drum of mosquito chemical under the forward purchasing program, which locks in the current price. Payment is not due until 2015. The total cost will be \$2493.75. Council approved the request.

Councilman Warrum announced the Park Board received a check from the Posey Co. Community Foundation for \$11,124. for work on the Murphy Park Shelter House. Work will begin after the first of the year, weather permitting.

Councilman Wilson reported he is looking into having some tuck pointing done on the columns at Maple Hill Cemetery. He also asked that the leaves along the curbs at the Cemetery be removed.

President Straw opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2014-9, which sets the rates and charges for the wastewater utility. Councilman Walker read Ordinance 2014-9 in title only. She commented she had done some further research since the last meeting and there are 509 households with average usage below the minimum, and 86 above the minimum. David Flanders asked if this increase is due to anticipated construction. Councilman Walker responded that the Town is being mandated to remove phosphorous from the wastewater, which means additional chemical expense plus the cost of the containers to hold the sludge. Also, a small building may have to be constructed to store the chemicals. Mr. Flanders asked if the proposed rate increase will cover the expected costs of treating the phosphorous. Councilman Walker stated the Town has three years in which to implement the phosphorous plan, and therefore this increase will not cover all the additional costs. However, she stated this is the first step, and the rate consultant had recommended a 28.6% rate increase immediately. However, Council has decided to implement a 10% increase now and another 10% increase in a year. Mr. Flanders inquired about what a "normal" user is defined as in the ordinance. Councilman Walker stated she believes that would be a normal household user. Mr. Flanders commented on a printing error in the public notice that was printed in the Posey Co. News and he asked if that invalidated the ordinance. The error was an incorrect effective date for the 2016 rate increase. Attorney Farrar stated this would not invalidate the ordinance unless someone objects to it at the public hearing since it was simply a clerical error. David Campbell reviewed some of the cumulative funds that will be brought in over the next couple of years prior to implementation of the phosphorous removal. Councilman Walker stated she hopes this phased in increase will cover the deficit and that an increase won't be needed the following year. President Straw closed the public hearing on Ordinance 2014-9. President Straw read Ordinance 2014-9 in title only. Councilman Wilson made and Walker seconded a motion that Ordinance 2014-9 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Nancy McCaslin, the editor of Jane Blaffer Owen's memoir, spoke to Council about adopting a proclamation in honor of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in April, 2015. She encouraged Council members to contact her if they would like changes made to the draft proclamation she prepared.

Clerk-Treasurer Atkins requested permission to write off two uncollectable utility accounts in the total amount of \$444.19. Councilman Warrum made and Wilson seconded a motion that the accounts be written off as requested. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Straw read Ordinance 2014-10 in title only. This ordinance sets the salaries for the elected officials effective January 1, 2015. Councilman Walker made and Gibbs seconded a motion that Ordinance 2014-10 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Wilson made and Warrum seconded a motion that funds in the amount of \$149,136. be encumbered in the General Fund for 2014 to cover the Town's share of the storm water project and \$4,770. be encumbered in the Cemetery Fund for 2014 to cover monument restoration. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Straw read Resolution 2014-3 in title only. This resolution authorizes appropriation transfers within the General Fund. Councilman Wilson made and Walker seconded a motion that Resolution 2014-3 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Atkins read Resolution 2014-4 in title only. This resolution authorizes appropriation transfers in the County Option Income Tax Fund. Councilman Walker made and Warrum seconded a motion that Resolution 2014-4 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Atkins read Resolution 2014-5 in title only. This resolution authorizes appropriation transfers in the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund. Councilman Warrum made and Wilson seconded a motion that Resolution 2014-5 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Atkins read Resolution 2014-6 in title only. This resolution authorizes appropriation transfers in the Park Fund. Councilman Warrum made and Walker seconded a motion that Resolution 2014-6 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Atkins read Resolution 2014-7 in title only. This resolution authorizes appropriation transfers in the Economic Development Income Tax Fund. Councilman Walker made and Wilson seconded a motion that Resolution 2014-7 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

David Flanders, with the New Harmony Business Associates, presented certificates of appreciation to the Town Council and Town employees for their support and cooperation during his tenure as president of the group.

David Flanders expressed concern over the street closure at Brewery and South Sts. He has guests arriving at his business and he is concerned they may not be able to access his property. He suggested that “detour” signs be used instead of “road closed” signs in the future. Council members agreed this was a good idea.

David Campbell stated he has a copy of a contract for purchase of Harmony Way Bridge between the Posey Co. Commissioners and the White Co. Bridge Commission. He read a portion of the contract which states the Posey Co. Commissioners desire to partner with the Town Council of New Harmony to pursue funding to reopen the bridge. The contract also stipulates that an inter local agreement must be executed with the Town Council prior to closing. He feels this could put the Town in a lot of debt and could be a deplorable situation.

Councilman Wilson reported he has been working with Councilmen Walker and Warrum to find a reuse for the school property as well as to look into demolition of the building. He has prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP), which he would like Council to review and make changes as needed. They would then like approval in January to proceed with the RFP procedure. Councilman Gibbs commented he feels the building will eventually be razed, and the longer that is postponed, the more expensive it will be. Councilman Walker stated the first estimate to raze the structure is \$400,000. She hopes to have two more estimates before the next meeting.

Councilman Wilson reported he has received draft inter local agreement between the Posey Co. Commissioners and the Town Council. The inter local agreement essentially requires that the Town do everything, per Councilman Wilson. He distributed copies of the agreement to Council members and Attorney Farrar. Councilman Wilson stated the Bridge Committee is continuing to work on the situation and they are not going to give up.

Councilman Gibbs inquired about the funds remaining with the White Co. Bridge Commission. Councilman Wilson stated he is not aware of exactly how much has been spent since the closing of the bridge. However, taxes are still being billed and there is income being generated due to the fiber optic line that is on the bridge as well as the Town’s gas line.

Councilman Walker made and Warrum seconded a motion the claims be allowed and the Clerk pay the same. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Straw stated Council is looking into hiring a new Town Attorney. Attorney Farrar was thanked for his work for the Town and he agreed to continue to serve until a replacement is found.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Joe Straw, President of Town Council

Attest:

Karla L. Atkins, Clerk-Treasurer